Increased Prostaglandin E_2 Has a Positive Correlation with Plasma Calcium during Goldfish Reproduction

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Increased Prostaglandin E₂ Has a Positive Correlation with Plasma Calcium during Goldfish Reproduction

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We recently demonstrated that prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂) increases osteoclastic activity and induces bone resorption in both in vitro and in vivo experiments using goldfish. In the fish reproductive period, the plasma calcium (Ca) level in female teleosts increases remarkably to make vitellogenin, which is a major component of egg protein and a Ca-binding protein. In this period, however, there is no reported relationship between PGE₂ and Ca metabolism in fish. To clarify the Ca metabolism in fish reproduction, we examined plasma PGE₂, and Ca levels and measured tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase (TRAP) activities as an indicator of osteoclastic activity in goldfish. Plasma PGE₂ levels in the reproductive stage significantly increased as compared with those in non-reproductive stages. Also, both plasma Ca and TRAP increased in the reproductive stage. Significant positive correlations were recognized between plasma Ca and the gonad somatic index (r=0.81, p<0.001), plasma Ca and plasma PGE₂ levels (r=0.635, p<0.05), and plasma Ca and plasma TRAP activities (r=0.584, p<0.05) from the analysis using samples of both reproductive and non-reproductive stages. Taking these data into consideration, we suggested that PGE₂ acts on osteoclasts and increases plasma Ca as a result of osteoclastic bone resorption, and we concluded that PGE₂ is an important hormone in Ca metabolism during fish reproduction.

Key words: goldfish, plasma Ca, Prostaglandin E₂, reproduction, TRAP

INTRODUCTION

Prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂) functions to bone metabolism and is an important hormone in bone and promoter of osteoclastogenesis (Kaji et al., 1996; Gardner, 2007; Kaneko et al., 2007). The bone-resorbing activity of mature osteoclasts in osteoblast-containing mouse bone cell cultures was increased by PGE₂, although it did not affect osteoclast-like cell formation in osteoblast-free mouse spleen cell cultures (Kaji et al., 1996). Therefore, we focused on fish scales that coexist with both osteoclasts and osteoblasts (Bereiter–Hahn and Zylberberg, 1993; Suzuki et al., 2000; Yoshikubo et al., 2005; Suzuki et al., 2007; Suzuki et al., 2008; Suzuki et al., 2011; Yano et al., 2013). Using the goldfish scale in in vitro assay system, we recently demonstrated that PGE₂ acts on osteoblasts and then increases the osteoclastic activity in the scales of goldfish as it does in the bone of mammals (Omori et al., 2012). In addition, the intraperitoneal injection of PGE₂ into goldfish induced hypercalcemia (Omori et al., 2012).

In the reproductive period, the plasma calcium (Ca) level in female teleosts increases remarkably (Watts et al., 1975; Yamauchi et al., 1978; Norberg et al., 1989; Suzuki et al., 2004). This Ca is bound to vitellogenin, which is a major component of egg protein and the calcium-binding protein (Tinsley, 1985; Kwon et al., 1993). In this period, PGE₂ synthesized in the ovaries functions to cause ovulation in fish (for a review, see Takahashi et al., 2013). As van Anholt et al. (2003) reported that PGE₂ in the blood may serve some physiological roles in fish, PGE₂ secreted from the ovaries might influence plasma Ca in fish. However, there has been no reported relationship between PGE₂ and Ca metabolism during the fish reproductive period.

To clarify the Ca metabolism in fish reproduction, we examined plasma PGE₂ and Ca levels and measured tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase (TRAP) activities as an indicator of osteoclastic activity in goldfish.

We concluded that PGE₂ is an important hormone in Ca metabolism during fish reproduction.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Animals
Female goldfish (n=14, 49.16±3.77 g) were purchased from a commercial source (Higashikawa Fish Farm, Yamatokoriyama, Japan) and used in the present study. All experimental procedures were conducted in accordance with the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals of Kanazawa University.

Measurement of plasma PGE₂, Ca, and TRAP levels of female goldfish in reproductive and non-reproductive stages
Goldfish in both the reproductive (March) (n=8) and non-reproductive (August) (n=6) stages were anesthetized with ethyl 3-aminobenzoate methanesulfonic acid salt (Sigma-Aldrich Inc., MO, USA). After weighing, the gonad somatic index (GSI) (%) was calculated. A blood sample was then collected from the dorsal aorta using a heparinized syringe. After centrifugation at 15,000 rpm for 3 min, the plasma was immediately frozen and kept at −80°C until use. The plasma total Ca (mg/100 ml) and PGE₂ (pg/ml) levels were determined using specific assay kits (Ca: Calcium E test; PGE₂: PGE₂-ELISA kit, Wako Pure Chemical Industries, Ltd., Osaka, Japan).

The plasma TRAP level was measured using 2 μl of plasma from each goldfish. TRAP activities were measured using an acid tartrate buffer (a 20 mM tartrate in a 0.1 M sodium acetate buffer (pH 5.3)). An aliquot of 100 μl of 20 mM para-nitrophenyl phosphate in an acid tartrate buffer was added to each well in a 96-well microplate. This plate was then incubated at 20°C for 30 min while being shaken. After incubation, the reaction was stopped by adding 50 μl of a 3 N NaOH–20 mM EDTA solution, and the absorbance was then measured at 405 nm. The absorbance was converted into the amount of produced para-nitrophenol (pNP) using a standard curve for pNP.

Statistical analysis
All results are expressed as the means ± SE. Statistical significance was assessed by Student’s t-test. Simple correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the relationship among GSI values, plasma PGE₂ levels, plasma Ca levels, and plasma TRAP activities. The statistical significance of the correlation was evaluated using the method of Shedecor and Cochran (1980). In all cases, the selected significance level was p<0.05.

RESULTS
Changes in GSI, plasma PGE₂ levels, Ca levels, and TRAP activities of female goldfish in reproductive and non-reproductive stages
There was a significant difference in the values of GSI between goldfish in March and August (Fig. 1). In addition, the plasma PGE₂ levels, Ca levels, and TRAP activities of female goldfish in March were significantly higher than those in August (Figs. 2, 3, and 4).

Fig. 1. GSI values of female goldfish in the reproductive (March) and non-reproductive (August) stages. *** indicates a statistically significant difference at p<0.001 in the values of the reproductive and non-reproductive stages.

Fig. 2. Plasma PGE₂ values of female goldfish in the reproductive (March) and non-reproductive (August) stages. ** indicates a statistically significant difference at p<0.01 in the values of the reproductive and non-reproductive stages.

Fig. 3. Plasma Ca values of female goldfish in the reproductive (March) and non-reproductive (August) stages. *** indicates a statistically significant difference at p<0.001 in the values of the reproductive and non-reproductive stages.

Fig. 4. Plasma TRAP activity (nmol pNP produced/μl/h) values of female goldfish in the reproductive (March) and non-reproductive (August) stages. ** indicates a statistically significant difference at p<0.01 in the values of the reproductive and non-reproductive stages.
Correlation among GSI, plasma PGE$_2$ levels, Ca levels, and TRAP activities

The results of correlation among GSI, plasma PGE$_2$ levels, Ca levels, and TRAP activities are indicated in Table 1. Significant positive correlations were recognized between GSI and plasma PGE$_2$ ($r=0.790$, $p<0.001$), GSI and plasma Ca ($r=0.813$, $p<0.001$), and GSI and plasma TRAP ($r=0.631$, $p<0.05$) from the analysis using samples of both reproductive and non-reproductive stages.

As a result of having paid attention to the relations with plasma Ca, we discovered a significant positive relationship between plasma Ca and PGE$_2$ ($r=0.635$, $p<0.05$) (Fig. 5), and between plasma Ca and TRAP ($r=0.584$, $p<0.05$) (Fig. 6).

As PGE$_2$ levels increased, plasma TRAP activities tended to rise ($r=0.514$, $p=0.058$).

DISCUSSION

The present study is the first to demonstrate that PGE$_2$ is related to Ca metabolism in fish reproduction. Corresponding to increased GSI, plasma PGE$_2$ levels, Ca levels, and TRAP activities rose. In addition, significant correlations between plasma Ca and PGE$_2$, and between Ca and TRAP were observed. Because TRAP is known as an osteoclast–specific marker (for a review, see Vaes, 1988), the increased PGE$_2$ in the March fish activated osteoclasts and promoted osteoclastic bone resorption. As described in the introduction, we recently demonstrated that PGE$_2$ acts on osteoblasts and increases the osteoclastic activity in the scales of goldfish as it does in the bone of mammals (Omori et al., 2012). In an in vivo experiment, furthermore, hypercalcemia was induced as a result of osteoclastic bone resorption after an intraperitoneal injection of PGE$_2$ into goldfish (Omori et al., 2012). Taking these results into consideration together with the present study, we have concluded that PGE$_2$ acts as a calcemic hormone in fish reproduction.

In the present study, the highest correlation between GSI and plasma Ca was recognized. We think that several hormones, with the exception of PGE$_2$, are involved in Ca metabolism during fish reproduction. The candidate for this hypercalcemic hormone is estrogen. In female teleosts, estrogen enhances the synthesis of vitellogenin, which is a major component of egg protein and a Ca–binding protein (Tinsley, 1985; Kwon et al., 1993). At the same time, estrogen promotes Ca resorption from the scales by activating osteoclasts (Persson et al., 1995; Suzuki et al., 2000; Suzuki and Hattori, 2003; Suzuki et al., 2009). Consequently, plasma vitellogenin and Ca levels increase corresponding to the increase in estrogen level (Norberg et al., 1989). PGE$_2$ is closely related to ovulation (late stage of fish reproduction) (for a review, see Takahashi et al., 2013), suggesting that in the early stage of fish reproduction, estrogen acts as a hypercalcemic hormone, and then PGE$_2$ plays roles in both ovulation and Ca metabolism.

On the other hand, we previously demonstrated that a hypocalcemic hormone, calcitonin, acts on scales and inhibits osteoclastic activity using an in vitro scale assay system with goldfish (Suzuki et al., 2000). As estrogen activates osteoclasts in some teleosts in both in vivo and in vitro experiments (Persson et al., 1995; Suzuki et al., 2000; Suzuki and Hattori, 2002; Suzuki and Hattori, 2003; Suzuki et al., 2009), a counteraction may...
exist between calcitonin and estrogen in osteoclasts of the scale. Using the in vitro scale assay system, the increased osteoclastic activity with estrogen was actually suppressed by calcitonin in goldfish (Suzuki et al., 2000). Furthermore, our previous study demonstrated the interaction between calcitonin and estrogen. In the ultimobranchial gland, which is the secretion organ of calcitonin, estrogen receptors were detected by estrogen-specific binding assay and immunohistochemical analysis in goldfish (Suzuki et al., 2004). Also, three types of estrogen receptors were detected in the ultimobranchial gland of goldfish (Suzuki et al., 2004). Moreover, just after injecting estrogen into goldfish, plasma calcitonin level increased before the rise of plasma Ca (Suzuki et al., 2004). Considering from our present data, we strongly suggested that PGE2 affects other calcemic hormones in fish reproduction. Thus, in the future, we will examine the interaction among calcemic hormones, such as PGE2, calcitonin, and estrogen, and elucidate the mechanism of osteost bone metabolism during the reproductive stages.

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